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October 30, 1962

Dr. Henry Swan
303 Josephine
Denver 6, Colorado

Dear Henry:

I am sorry to be this tardy in writing to you after our lovely lunch and several hours together, and as you remember, I told you that I had to rush home the next day because of my daughter being ill, and I have been pretty well entertained since getting home.

First, let me tell you how thoroughly I enjoyed the time I spent with you, and it was an odd situation that while I wanted to spend the time with you with the feeling that you might be able to help me, since I've left you and given it some thought I think that this might be mutually beneficial because certainly you have been through a shaking experience with your change in situation from university status to private practice, and if I don't know anything about anything else, I know about what there is to know about private practice.

I was greatly encouraged about your words concerning not-for-profit foundation, and I have already gotten things underway to push it as far as I possibly can with the same feeling that you have that privately supported foundations are indeed the best hope and the best bulwark for true private practice of high quality in this country.

As I think about your situation, Henry, several things strike me. First, even though you are not professor as of now since July 1st, you still are saddled with many obligations that went with being professor to keep you away from Denver for long periods of time away from your practice and away from the place where you can do what you do best, namely, take care of people who have heart disease. I am utterly convinced that all fame is fleeting and no fame is fleeting as that of a surgeon or an athlete, and for that reason I would like to give you some very blunt advice. In fulfilling the obligations incident to having been professor, I gather that you are going to be away from Denver a good deal of the time for the next year or eighteen months. I couldn't help wondering if you have given any thought to the fact that the

first year or eighteen months that you are without your professorial rank and without the position that the medical school made possible and without the number of people running errands for you and looking after things when you are gone, and when, indeed, no surgery is done in the name of Henry Swan unless and until Henry Swan is in Denver, that perhaps this is the most valuable year that you're ever going to have in private practice in that if you are gone enough for a year or eighteen months and doctors from all over the world continue to seek you out to send patients to you, I can assure you from my experience that if you are absent for a year or eighteen months each time they call, you're not there and you're not going to be there, nothing is more fickle than a doctor with a patient to refer. In short, I would say that if I were you I would fulfil only those obligations which do something for Henry Swan because certainly in the twelve years that you were at the University of Colorado you contributed more to the general wellbeing of the human community than most people are ever fortunate enough to have the opportunity to do, and it is now time to think a little bit about Henry Swan. John D. Murphy once was credited with having said that the one absolute essential of a successful surgical operation was the patient. This is the thing that I am pointing out to you, Henry, because this is the time whenⁱⁿ the transition from university status to private practice it is so utterly important that you be present and be available. I wonder again whether it is going to be possible for you to carry on the kind of work you do without having an adequate associate who can spare you and give you some time off and some time to attend meetings which, of course, you must do and, Henry, by all means, you must continue to write and now write from the richness of your clinical experience, and you will find that this can be done, indeed, without dogs, guinea pigs or any other kind of animals because you are now past that stage, and you are at the stage where you should give from the richness of your past clinical experience. In short, keep the name Henry Swan in front of the public and keep those positions which are of advantage to you but do not put yourselves in the hands of those who do not wish you well by being gone from Denver so much of the time that they can replace you with someone to catch the patients that you are unable to take care of because of not being there on the first bounce, so to speak.

I realize that I have no right whatsoever to give you any advice, but I detected in talking to you that you are an idealist which I like to think I am and also that you are sensitive to the hurts that are passed out in this world rather generously, and that no matter how you may act at one time or another, each one of these episodes does something to your soul. For that reason, Henry, don't open yourself to any more hurts than you have to because having had some of these things happen myself, I realize full well that it is possible to be hurt too much.

Dr. Henry Swan

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I hope you don't mind me liking you well enough and admiring you enough to want to help you, but I have thought about it ever since we talked and I am unable to resist these few comments.

I plan to be at Western for the meeting this year in St. Louis, and I sincerely hope that you will be able to be there, and if so, if you are there alone or if Mrs. Swan is with you, do try to save us some time. We have been asked to be the guests of Dean Sauer at his home, but I rather imagine we will stay at the Chase Park Plaza. Drop me a line when you get a chance. I will be interested to know what you think of my unsolicited advice.

Sincerely,


Mort Bolman

RMB:k